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has been in general a period of the strengthening of defenses, if one may employ a military term for things pacific. Several controversies previously referred to arbitral tribunals have been disposed of, most notable of which were the Samoan, the United States-Russian and the Chile-Argentinian cases. The Hague Court has gotten into operation by the settlement, with remarkable dispatch, of its first case, and by the reference to it of a second dispute, of which events our readers have been fully informed. The Pan-American Conference, which closed its deliberations on the 31st of January last, took steps for the extension of the provisions of the Hague Convention to all the nations of the Western world and for the reference of all American international claims to the Hague Court. The representatives of ten of the South American governments have signed a treaty for the submission to arbitration of all disputes among their respective states. The Spanish government has undertaken the negotiation of treaties of obligatory arbitration with all the Spanish-American republics. Chile and the Argentine Republic have entered into a compact for the submission of all their pending differences to arbitration, and into another for the actual arrest and decrease of armaments.

This is an extraordinary record for a single year, even though some of this work begun may fail to be carried through. What has been done may not have been as pivotal and epoch-making as some steps taken in years past, but its value in strengthening and widening the scope of previous acquisitions is very great.

The year has seen brought to a close two iniquitous and altogether inexcusable wars, whose cruel and expensive lessons are not likely soon to be forgotten by the peoples who allowed themselves to be duped and dragged blindly into them by their governments. The protest against these wars was strong and widespread to the very last, and their results are at the present moment as offensive to the moral sense of those who made the protest as was the course of the wars themselves. This is an indication that opposition to war is not only growing numerically, but also in moral courage and stability.

When everything is considered, the chief progress of the year has been the increased number of people who have come to loathe war and to rank themselves henceforth on the side of its avowed adversaries. On this ground, as well as because of the other considerations adduced above, the friends of peace have stronger reasons than ever before for going forward in their work with enlarged faith and hope. The end of the movement may be yet a good way off, but that there is to be a glorious consummation of it in the permanent peace of the world, there is no longer reason to doubt.

Armies, Navies and War Clouds.

President Roosevelt's message to Congress in December reiterated, with his accustomed rhetoric, his well-known opinions on the army and navy. There is not much new in what he said except in some of the phraseologies.

The army he considers "very small for the size of the nation." Did it occur to him, in the fervor of his thought, that the standard by which the size of an army for such a nation as ours should be determined, if we grant that one should be kept at all, is not the area of the country, but its state of civilization and the actual need of a military police force? Judged from this point of view the army, as it now is, is at least three or four times as large as there is any necessity of maintaining. There is much less need of even twenty-five thousand soldiers than there was twenty-five years ago. Most of the sixty thousand men of the "new army" must be maintained in practical idleness at the expense of the people, with nothing conceivable in prospect for them to do, unless it be to help get up a war!

All the President's recommendations in respect to the army are in line with the purpose of the militarists to reorganize it as far as possible after European models. He recommends the system of annual "big manœuvres" practiced in the Old World, in order to keep the officers ready at any moment for actual war. He urges also the adoption of the European system of a "general staff," which everybody knows has been one of the main factors in making the European armies practical dictators of the policies of the governments. He asks prompt action on the bill for the reorganization of the militia system, which has already passed the House and is now before the Senate. This insidious bill is intended to make our entire military establishment in the States conform as far as possible to the system of first and second reserves in the European armies. It is thus sought to foist in upon the people, who are known to have no liking for a large standing army, what in the final development will virtually be one. The bill creates about fifty adjutant-generals for the States and Territories who will have to be maintained with large salaries at the expense of the people. It increases the power of the national government over the militia, thus encroaches upon the authority of the states, makes the militia in certain eventualities practical conscripts, and is in general simply a back-stairs method of militarizing the nation. As such it ought to be judged and unqualifiedly condemned.

In the matter of the navy the President repeats, with somewhat curtailed eloquence, the recommendations of his first message. With all his strenuousness he begs for more men, more fighting craft, more target practice, more great manœuvres like that now going on in the West Indies. The foreign policies

"which we have deliberately made our own" (he means colonial imperialism), demand a "first-class navy;" our "army diminutive indeed" demands a big navy; the isthmian canal demands a navy of "sufficient size" to prevent this proposed waterway from proving our ruin; the Monroe doctrine, "the cardinal feature of American foreign policy," demands an "adequate," "a thoroughly good navy."

The President repeats, we fear with thoughtless sincerity, the threadbare and altogether groundless assertion of militarists, that a good navy is not a provocative of war, but the surest guaranty of peace. There is not a war cloud on the horizon, he declares; there seems not the slightest chance of trouble with a foreign power; and the way to insure the continuance of this security is to "provide for a thoroughly efficient navy!" To refuse to provide such a navy is to invite trouble and to insure disaster!

It is difficult to keep a straight face while reading this torrent-like would-be argument for the strenuous increase of the navy. Does the President really believe that the absence of war clouds from our horizon is chiefly due to the fact that we have a considerable navy? that if we had none, as was practically the case in 1885, the nations would be falling upon us at the present moment like harpies from all sides, to pick us — eighty millions of us — to pieces? Do justice and fair dealing and magnanimity in our conduct toward other peoples mean just nothing as a ground for security? Are all the great peoples of the civilized world, with whom we have multiplied peaceful and trustful relations, still nothing more than a pack of ravenous, bloodthirsty barbarians, restrained from devouring us only by the flaming sword — the marshaled navy — at the gateway of our Eden?

The President's alleged reasons for urging a large and rapid increase of the navy are, in what they imply, little short of an insult to the intelligence and common sense of the American people, who are not likely to forget altogether our hundred years and more of prosperity, growth and unparalleled security, under a policy as opposite as possible to the one now urged. They are no less an insult to the nations whom he had in mind as ready to fall upon us like a horde of degenerate and villainous robbers, having no consideration for anything civilized and humane. The real reasons which actuate the President, and those of like mind with him, to demand a huge American navy, are false and crude notions as to the moral value of armaments, and the perverted ideas now possessing so many of the people as to what constitutes the real greatness, glory and moral power of a nation. This is the root out of which the big navy is growing.

We are glad to see that in the Senate, where the subject of naval increase is now under consideration, there is strong opposition to the President's naval program. Senator Hale of Maine, chairman of the committee on naval affairs, with whom other senators

agree, sees nothing in the Venezuelan incident to induce the rushing on of the navy to an enormous size. He declares that a big navy, in his view, is not a guarantee of peace, but a temptation to war. The senator does not go so far in his opposition as we should do, but if his purpose to keep to a program of moderate increase prevails, it will save the country from a good many very serious impending perils.

The Brutalism of Force.

It has been shown times without number that might, when cultivated as a means of redressing wrongs and of enforcing one's self-interpreted rights, tends inevitably to aggression and brutality. In contests on this basis it is the mightier that wins. Hence those who make might their reliance put forth every effort to outdo others in surrounding themselves with a superior equipment of it. They must have the heaviest club, the finest pistol, the most reliable blade, the most powerful rifle, the strongest fortifications, the biggest and swiftest ships, the most terrific explosives. Once ahead of others, they become overbearing, contemptuous and dictatorial. They magnify their own virtues and claims; they are quick to take offense and to exaggerate the wrongs, real or supposed, done them. From this attitude they proceed easily to open offensiveness and aggression wherever circumstances favor their designs.

The latest exhibition of the force of this unalterable law of might is the miserable performance of Great Britain and Germany in their attempt to collect certain debts from Venezuela. The difference in size and military strength of the parties, the time of Venezuela's greatest weakness selected for the assault, and the methods of procedure mark the conduct of the two allied powers as, in intent at least, highhanded and brutal beyond almost anything done by "civilized" powers in recent years. It has also been stupid and foolish to the last degree, from a business point of view. When a business man goes to collect a debt, he does not begin by setting fire to the debtor's shop or smashing a portion of his wares.

That this highhandedness has not gone to the length of the aggressions of the United States in the Philippines, of Great Britain in South Africa, or of the allies during the invasion of China, is not to be set down to the credit of the aggressors, to their restraint or love of fair play. If nothing had been in their way, we should already be spectators to the killing, the "drawing and quartering," of another nation. But they suddenly discovered that their bluff had not worked, that their violence had united all Venezuela against them, and that they were on the verge of a war out of which they would be allowed to reap nothing except the mere pittance of a debt, unless they were willing to meet in combat the great power of the Western world. Their brave front suddenly